

Edward Abner Building (Playland Adult
Bookstore)
413-415 9th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

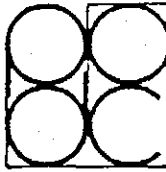
HABS No. DC-522

HABS
DC,
WASH,
281-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127



PENNSYLVANIA
AVENUE
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION
425 13TH STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

GENERAL CONSULTANTS

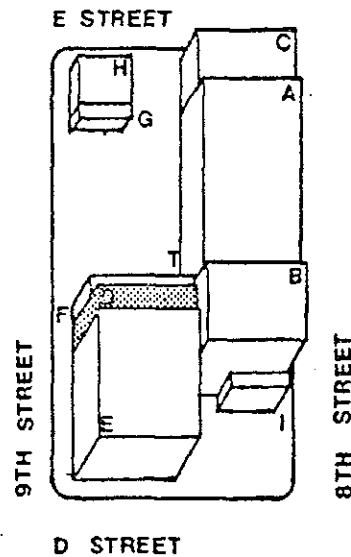
ANDERSON, NOTTER / MARIANI
GENERAL PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT
DEYROUX & PURNELL
ASSOCIATE ARCHITECTS
DAVID MCLAREN, HART & ASSOCIATES
PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT
MONK DUNSTONE ASSOCIATES
COST ESTIMATING CONSULTANT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

BUILDING DOCUMENTATION

HABS
DC,
WASH,
201-

Edward Abner Building
(Playland Adult Bookstore)
413 - 415 Ninth Street, NW
Lot 802



GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Located on Ninth Street near the intersection of D Street, the Playland Adult Bookstore is a late Nineteenth Century structure. It is included in the Hopkins 1887 plat map of Washington, DC. No initial building permit is available. It lies in the center, western section of the square. Rectangular in plan, lot dimensions are twenty-five feet on the north-south axis, one hundred feet on the east-west axis. The building volume steps back from the street facade, from four stories on the west to one story at the rear or east end of the lot. The western portion of the building mass features a rectangular well along the south party wall, providing light and ventilation to the upper three floors. There are two existing chimneys along the north party wall, one along the south. None of them are in use. In 1939 the original tin roof was replaced by an asphalt slag roof on the entire top floor, (Building Permit No. 225,806, 8-24-1939).

The Ninth Street brick facade incorporates contemporary ground floor styling and original architectural detailing on the three upper stories. The facade features bay flexibility: the second story integrates a three-bay system while the third and fourth stories contain a four-bay arrangement. Decorative flexibility is also realized in the arches at upper story levels, and in the display of metal ornamentation on the uppermost floor. Finally, iron fire stairs are hung from the facade and run between the second floor sill line and the fourth floor.

The rear elevation is brick, with each floor featuring two segmental-arched windows with double-hung six over six wooden sash. On the second floor, the window opening to the south was originally an arched double-width opening, but it has been narrowed to normal width.

The brick shell, its wood-framed structures spanning the party walls, is typical of buildings of this size and era. Tie rods between party walls occur at all three upper levels and feature five-and eight-pointed star anchors on both north and south walls.

The building's ground floor utilizes the total interior space as an adult bookstore - it is almost evenly partitioned into front and rear interiors, a merchandise and a movie booth area, respectively. The front space is entirely open and fully remodelled in a modern, inexpensive design vernacular. The rear space is occupied by nine rooms on each side all symmetrical to a central corridor and one at the far, right end. Again, remodelling meets contemporary design. On the second floor is a modernized office space, independent of the

bookstore enterprise. It is reached through a straight-run staircase adjacent to the north party wall - the staircase is assumed to be replicated between the upper two levels. Interiors of the building's two uppermost levels, although in use, were made inaccessible by the present occupants.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The scale and modelling of this High Victorian Italianate commercial structure is consistent with the Nineteenth Century buildings in the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation site. There is some disfigurement arising from the modern storefront addition and the fire stairs which criss-cross its street elevation. Nevertheless, the facade is complimentary in overall architectural approach with its adjoining neighbor to the north. But to the south, it is uncomfortably braced by a large four-story parking garage.

Featuring four stories dominated by applied ornaments, this Ninth Street facade enjoys, still, strong visual importance. The brick surface is combined with a high plastic statement of decorative detailing. Furthermore, in spite of several unresolved design aspects, such as the top-heaviness and the uneven bay distribution, the building's abundant embellishment marks it among the richest and best renditions of the Nineteenth Century commercial Victorian Italianate architecture in the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation District.

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

Facades: The Ninth Street four-story facade illustrates the symmetrical accommodation of heterogeneous level treatment upon a brick facing: there occurs a three bay system on the second story topped by a four bay organization on both the third and the fourth stories. Even though original window treatment was diverse, it is no longer readily evident, as all windows have been narrowed by six inches and foreshortened, eliminating segmental arches on the second and third stories. This was apparently undertaken in order to achieve a homogenous window type - that is, the existing square-headed, double hung wood sash with six over six lites.

The base of the structure has been totally altered so that the original fabric is hidden. In its place is a modern aluminum storefront with two entrances - one to the north which provides access to the upper floors, and a second recessed entrance which accommodates access to the bookstore. This second entryway replaced a previous

1947 show window, (Building Permit No. 299,095, 7-16-1947). The storefront features a metal fascia which rises to the second story window sill line.

On the second floor each of the three windows carries a metal hood under a stilted-arched metal fascia (reflecting the original window configuration) and straight cornice - all are visually supported on a brick impost or corbel table, three brick courses high. Further embellishment is provided by prominent metal label stops with a floral motif and by a keystone with "Eastlake" palmette detailing.

The decorative program at the third floor is a simplified variation of that on the second, and here, the narrower interfenestration space demands a tighter ornamentation. The four windows are carried on wood sills. They are unified by stilted - arched hoods in the form of a continuous arcade. The fascia and cornice are here omitted. Corbels are similar to those on the floor below but the keystones are treated slightly differently, bearing a recessed panel ornament.

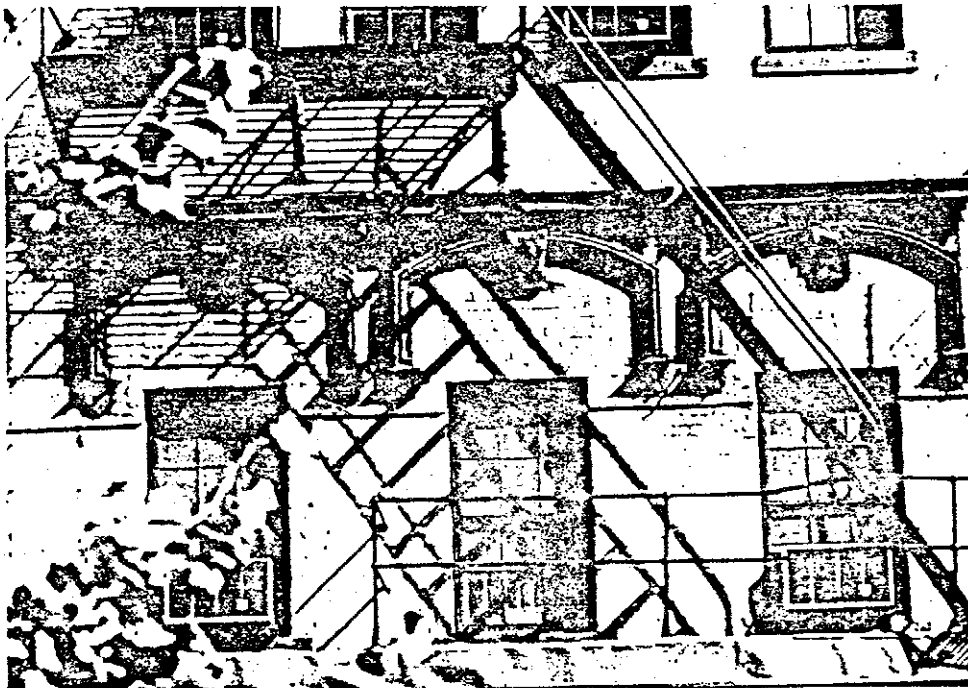
The fourth floor is the most outstanding feature of the facade and fully establishes its stylistic significance in the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation District. The composition at this uppermost level is established by a forceful pair of fluted metal pilasters at each side of the facade. These framing devices rest on a full entablature whose frieze and cornice span the full building width, and which, in turn, rests on animated twin consoles occurring under each pilaster pair. The architrave occurs only above the consoles. At the top of the parapet a boldly projecting cornice replicates the cornice of the entablature below, so that a very definite articulation of the fourth floor facade plane is established.

The hood arcade over the four fourth-floor windows establishes additional visual vibration to the facade. These vary from the hoods below - they are round-arched in response to the original configuration. In highlighting similar second story label stops and keystones, the hood arcade provides a degree of coherence with the ornamentation on the floors below.

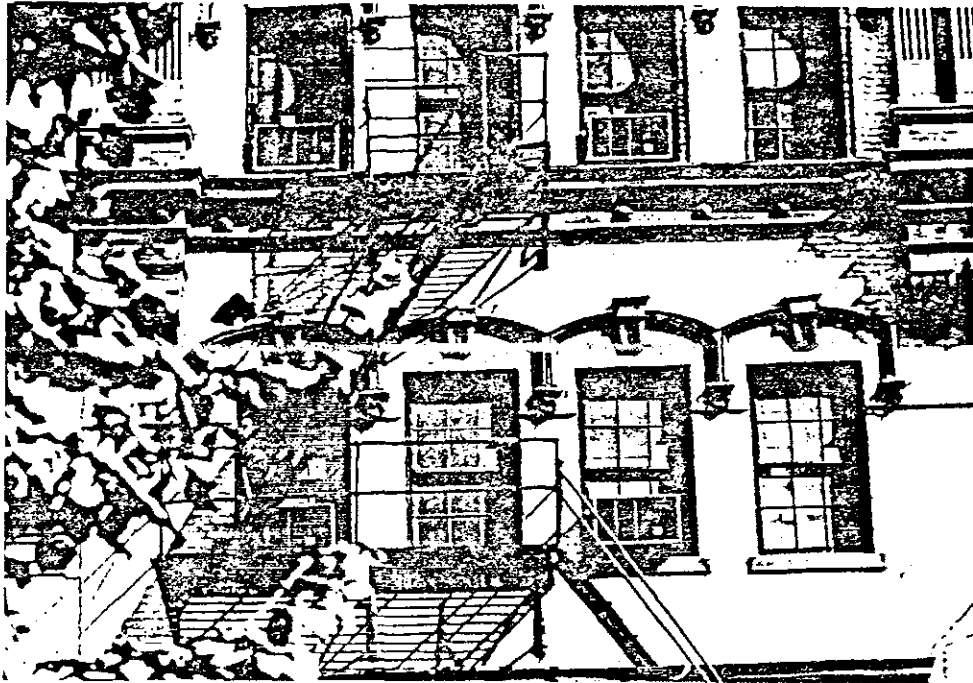
Thus, overall, a variety of structural and decorative detailing results through proportional and textural richness. Therefore, a strong interplay of void and solid, light and dark vitalizes the facade.



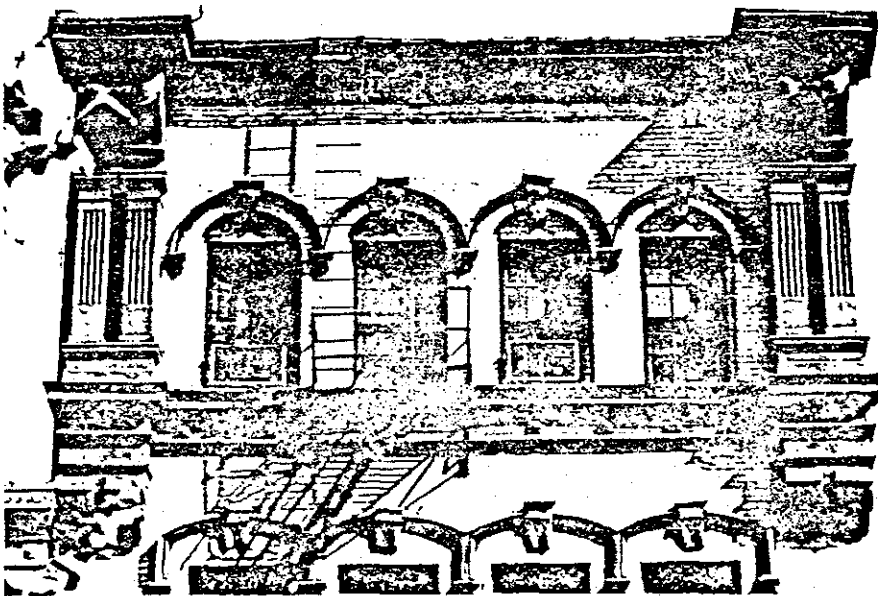
NINTH STREET FACADE (WEST)



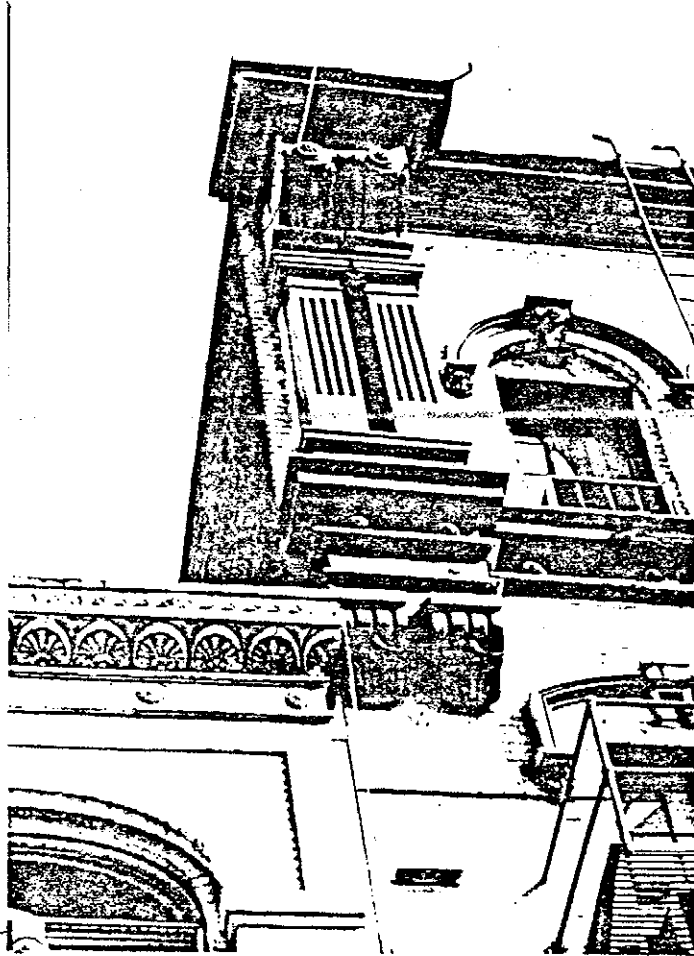
NINTH STREET FACADE: DETAIL OF 2ND FLOOR WINDOWS



NINTH STREET FACADE: DETAIL OF THIRD FLOOR WINDOOWS



NINTH STREET FACADE: DETAIL OF FOURTH FLOOR WINDOWS



NINTH STREET FACADE
DETAIL OF NORTH CONSOLE
AND PILASTERS

Lot 6 (Sublot 802)
413-415 9th Street

The original rectangular lot was situated on a western section of the square, measuring 51' x 100'. According to an 1887 plat map, the land was divided into three properties. The southern property had a 9th Street frontage of 25'. It filled only half the area, to the west (front); by 1892, the property included both front and rear areas, becoming no. 802 in 1919. This configuration has remained to the present, unchanged.

1819.....Morgan Oonohoo was titled the southern area.

1824.....Oonohoo was assessed \$375.00 for his land, \$200.00 for improvements.

1829/33...Oonohoo's lot assessment increased slightly to \$400.00. Improvements were \$100.00.

1840/43...The lot value was \$100.00, still in Oonohoo's name.

1859.....Oonohoo was assessed \$1,250.00 for his lot.

1871
to

1876.....413-415 9th Street had "no listing" in the City Directories.

1878/79
and

1883/84...The title was transferred to Edward Abner. An assessment of \$5,625.00 was indicated. 413-415 9th Street was occupied as a restaurant and wine/liquor store between 1879-1882 (owned by E. Abner).

1893/94
and
1899/

1900.....Leander M. Hubby was assessed \$8,125.00 (land), \$8,000.00 (improvements).

1901.....A February 12 permit (#1117) granted the erection of show windows at 413 9th Street (owned by Jason A. Roland, occupied by William E. Stockett Co.). Alterations consisted of removing partitions on the 3rd and 4th floors. The floor was to be restiffened to meet the requirements of the building inspector.

Jason A. Roland, owner, was permitted to set up and operate a gas engine. Weight of engine: 2 tons. Type of engine: Backus HP: 5. (Building Permit #1207, 3/11/1901.) Building use: Printing office.

1902

to

1916.....Stockett-Fiske Co., stationers, was established at 413-415 9th Street.

1906.....The American Electric Co. was contracted to install one 4 HP motor on the 2nd floor. (Building Permit #2693, 4/12/1906. Cost: \$50.00.)

A May 9 Building Permit (#2997) enabled the erection of an additional story on the rear of the building, and to install new lavatories in the 1st and 2nd stories of rear of building. Cost: \$2,800.00. Owner: James A. Roland. Contractor: W.S. Spencer.

A May 22 Building Permit #2997-A, granted the removal of existing show windows and one column. Also to reinforce the present beam with 28" steel I-beams and erect two new show windows, size: 3' x 7'-5". Cost: \$800.00. Owner: James A. Rowland. Contractor: W.S. Spencer. Building use: Printing office.

1907.....One 2-1/4 HP motor was installed at 413 9th Street (Building Permit #73, 7/16/1907. Cost: \$60.00).

1927.....Building Permit #7721, March 30, to Ruth C. Dodd: It allowed the removal of existing show window and to board up the opening at 415 9th Street. Cost: \$50.00.

1932

to

1935.....413-415 9th Street was listed as "vacant" in the City Directories.

1939.....Issued to J.E. Rose, Building Permit #219,510, of January 12, indicated the removal of the existing show window base and to insert a concrete slab. Top of slab was to be 5" below finished sidewalk level. Cost: \$50.00.

The June 27 permit (#224,239) granted the installation of a light and air shaft in the building, and to install fireproofing. Value: \$3,000.00. Owner: Jack Scholsburg. Building use: 1st and 2nd floor, commercial; 3rd and 4th, living quarter.

Another building permit to Jack Scholsburg called for the removal of the tin roof and to apply a 4-ply built asphalt slag roof on the entire building. (Building Permit #225,805, 8/24/1939. Cost: \$183.00.)

1940.....Southern Dairies, Inc., was contracted to install one class "D" refrigerator system at 413 9th Street, occupied by Playland (adult amusement) No. of stores: 3. Material of building: brick. (Building Permit #235,567, 8/15/1940. Cost: \$100.00.)

1946.....By an April 15 Building Permit (#242,487), J.F. Bennett was contracted to cut into the rear of the building at 413 9th Street for an air duct and a fan. Wall size: 16" x 17'-6". Also, 2 lintels were to be inserted, 4" x 6" x 3/8", over the opening. Cost: \$45.00. Owner: Jack Scholsburg.

1947.....Building Permit #299,095, July 16: Remove existing show window base and replace it with two doors; no structure change. Cost: \$150.00.

1952..
to

1981.....The building's ground floor has been occupied by Playland Amusement Co. The two upper stories, although in use, are made inaccessible by the present occupants.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Edward Abner Building
HABS No. DC-522
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ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

STATE Washington, D.C.	COUNTY	TOWN OR VICINITY
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) Edward Abner Building Source: DONT TEAR IT DOWN SURVEY		HABS NO. DC-522
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE Playland Adult Bookstore (last tenant of 413 9th Street)		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 413-415 9th Street, N.W.		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1879 (Assessment and Tax Books)	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) none known (if any)	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) The applied metal ornament on the upper floors of the facade make this building unusual and architecturally significant.		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) High Victorian Italianate		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) brick walls with wood framed structural system		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) Rectangular, twenty-five feet wide and one hundred feet deep (going from four stories in front to one in the rear).		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE The upper three stories have elaborate hoodmoulds with keystones and label stones, although each floor differs in detailing (e.g. curve of arch, presence of cornice). Most outstanding detail is the fourth floor which is framed in		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) projecting metal ornament. no interesting features survive. The bookstore, stairwell and upper floor (once apartments and offices) are entirely modern.		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES Sometime after 1942 (when the adult bookstore moved in), the first floor facade was changed. Other undated changes include reduction in size of windows, renovation of interiors, and removal of decorations above cornice.		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE fair, vacant		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE a 19th century drawing of the facade shows virtually every horizontal surface decorated with advertising for Abner's restaurant and the unusual pilasters, shield consoles, and other details were probably conceived as part of advertising treatment to call attention to Abner's business		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) DONT TEAR IT DOWN SURVEY (April 1980) By Sally Wages, Barbara Fallin, & L. Sobel PADC SURVEY (Nov. 1980) By Anderson Notter/Mariani and David McLaren Hart & Associates		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Bill Lebovich, consultant to Square 407 Limited Partnership		DATE May 31, 1989